

Belford's Kid

Nicknames Sometimes Prove Deceptive

By CLARISSA MACKIE

Roger Webb was the last to finish his dinner, and he was just leaving the mess house when Boss Clintock galloped up to the door and intercepted him.

"Say, Webb, have the others gone?"

"Yes; they are just rounding the last gate," said Roger, pointing to a half dozen rapidly diminishing horsemen.

"Anything I can do?"

"No—yes, of course you can. I've been called up to North Fork to identify a bunch of cattle, and I've just had a phone from Belford that his kid's coming over for a visit. It's thirty miles from Belford's place over here and a tiresome ride. He wants me to meet Teddy on the other side of Black pass and send a trusty man. I'll have to send you."

"Very well," returned Roger. "Shall I start now?"

"You better go right off and be sure and get on the other side of the pass, for the kid's afraid to come through in the dark."

"I'll be there," assured Roger, and he went away to saddle his horse.

Roger whistled and Buckskin bounded the turf lightly as they covered mile after mile of the twenty that lay between the Lone Bull ranch and the farther entrance to Black pass.

Now, when Roger and Buckskin threaded their way down its narrow, winding trail the sun had passed over the rocky summits of the pass, and a deep twilight was drawing down. As he went out at the other end he looked expectantly around the sunlit plain for a glimpse of Teddy Belford, but the lad was nowhere in sight.

"I suppose his dad has told him to wait here at the pass for me, and, as



HE URGED BUCKSKIN FORWARD.

he isn't here, I believe I'll nose around and have a look at that place Clintock was telling me about."

With a last glance along the trail ahead Roger turned to the right and followed directions he had received from the boss of the Lone Bull. In an hour he had found the ranch he was looking for, had a long talk with its owner and taken a hasty survey of the premises. He was favorably impressed with the place and believed it would make a good opening for him, also, it was well within the limit he had set for expenditure. He decided to talk it over with Clintock before closing a deal.

He was halfway back to the south entrance to Black pass before he remembered Belford's kid. He glanced around at the gray plain fast losing its outlines in the gathering dusk and smote his thigh sharply.

"Great horn! If I haven't forgotten the kid! I wonder—" He spurred Buckskin into a run without completing his sentence.

Long before he reached the pass he was straining his eyes for a glimpse of a horse and rider waiting for him. But he saw nothing, and when he finally pulled to a breathless standstill there he appeared to be all alone in the gloom.

"I don't believe he's arrived yet," he said uneasily. "If he was afraid of the pass he would be sure to wait for me."

Roger waited anxiously, listening for the faintest sound that might presage the approach of Teddy Belford. He rebuked himself bitterly for his neglect of duty—for running off to attend to his own affairs when he had assured Mr. Clintock that he would safely escort Teddy through Black pass to the Lone Bull ranch. All at once darkness fell completely, and there were only the distant stars winking down out of a dim blue sky.

Roger swore softly and turned Buckskin into the pass. He rode until he came to the middle of the pit of velvet blackness and listened. Far ahead of him he thought he heard a faint sound. Again it came—a broken whistle. He urged Buckskin forward until he heard plainly the tremulously whistled notes of "I'm Afraid to Go Home in the Dark."

"The dogson, plucky little kid!" ejaculated Roger thankfully, and then

he let out his voice until the pass echoed.

"Hello there! That you, Teddy Belford?"

"Yes," came back a shaking voice.

"Wait for me. Teddy. I'll be there in a minute."

In a few seconds he brought Buckskin to a scrambling halt. "Where are you, Teddy?" he asked.

"Right here," was a low toned reply close beside him. "That isn't Mr. Clintock, is it?"

"No. I'm Roger Webb. Mr. Clintock was called to North Fork and sent me instead. I was to wait on the other side of the pass for you, but I thought there was time enough to look at a piece of property I was interested in."

When they were riding slowly forward, allowing the horses to pick their way along the trail, Roger turned his head and resumed conversation with his unseen companion.

"You're afraid of this place, aren't you, Teddy?"

There was a little hesitation before the answer came curtly:

"Yes."

"I don't blame you. Were you whistling 'I'm Afraid to Go Home in the Dark' to keep up your spirits?"

"Yes; to shame myself for being afraid," was Teddy's crisp reply.

Roger laughed with unconcealed admiration. "You're a plucky kid," he remarked.

Teddy Belford did not answer, and Roger concluded that he was ashamed of what might have been termed a display of cowardice. He had no idea of how old Teddy Belford might be or whether he was large or small. So far his companion was merely a voice.

"How old are you, Teddy?" he asked suddenly.

No answer.

"How old are you, Teddy, lad?" repeated Roger good humoredly, not that he cared greatly, but the low, contrite voice of Belford's kid interested him without his knowing exactly why. It sent a thrill of paternal tenderness through his being. At least he thought it was paternal.

"I don't believe Mr. Clintock would have sent you to meet me if he had known how—how impudent you were going to be," said Teddy Belford calmly.

"Impudent—wow!" Roger was plainly disgusted. "I beg your pardon, Mr. Teddy Belford," he ended sarcastically.

"Mr. Teddy Belford!" repeated Belford's kid indignantly as they emerged from the gloom of the pass into the open plain where the trail lay white under the rays of a rising moon. Before Roger could turn around and look at his companion he heard the swish of a quirt through the air and Buckskin shot forward like a rocket.

"The little dev—devil!" panted Roger as he realized that Buckskin was having things his own mad way.

Mile after mile they pounded over the dry grass, away from the trail and far to the east of the Lone Bull ranch. Roger did not know what had become of Teddy Belford, and he did not care. He was aware that away off behind somewhere there was a faint thudding of hoofs.

Roger sawed away at Buckskin's obstinate mouth without result. He realized that the horse was growing tired, and if the beast could escape stepping into a prairie-dog's hole or did not stumble he might be brought to reason before long.

But Buckskin stumbled, and it happened so suddenly that Roger was tossed over the animal's head and landed surprised and dizzy on a crumpling sand hill. For an instant he lay there breathless and bruised watching Buckskin's form waiting warily near by.

"You old skyrocket!" he breathed at last.

Then another horse leaped into the moonlight, was turned loose to eat at the grass and a slender form hurried to Roger Webb's side and knelt down with a cool-hand on his forehead.

Roger saw that the newcomer wore skirts, and his dizziness increased.

"Oh, Mr. Webb, I am so sorry! I do hope you're not hurt!" cried the girl in the voice of Belford's kid.

"I'm all right," said the dazed cowboy, struggling to a sitting posture.

"But where did you come from?"

"Why, I was following you through Black pass, you know, and you were rather impudent. You know you were. You called me Teddy and kid and all that! But I should not have struck your horse. I am so ashamed, and I beg your pardon," she ended, with a dangerous quiver in her voice.

"Are you Teddy Belford?" demanded Roger.

"Yes. Theodora Belford. My friends call me Teddy. Father and Boss Clintock call me kid. I don't mind from them," she concluded.

"Of course not," said the chagrined Roger.

"Only, you see, nobody told you we were a girl and I thought you were a boy! The apologies are on my side."

"Well, we've got a whole lifetime to apologize to each other in," laughed Teddy Belford as she leaped into her saddle unassisted. "But let's not waste any time over that. I really think we are quits, Mr. Webb. I am afraid to think what a narrow escape you had. It would have been my fault if—

"I wouldn't have missed it for anything," said Roger sincerely, thinking of her cool hand on his forehead.

"We will be late for supper," said Teddy hurriedly.

As they rode home through the moonlight Roger decided that he would buy the ranch next to Belford's place. "It will be handy for her to run over and see her folks—after we are married," he said to himself.

Of this decision, of course, nothing until after they became engaged.

For the Children

A Little Girl's Fine Valentine For Papa.



Photo by American Press Association.

Points for Mothers

The Mother Heart Myth.

"We hear a great deal of the 'mother heart' of women," says Dolly Madison in her chat on "Mother Hearts," "of the instinct which makes them tender, kind, radiating gentleness. But I sometimes wonder if there is not, after all, a certain narrowness about the high estate of motherhood. Does it cramp a woman's sympathies, contract the boundaries of her tenderness, until it includes only her own little folk—the members of her own household?

"I am forced to ask this question when I see the many mothers who cherish their own children, forgetting the other poor babies who with their forlorn mothers make the sacred relation such a tragic circumstance.

"Perhaps there is no more self-sufficient creature than the really happy wife and mother. She is perfectly absorbed in her own children, her own home, her own husband. And the whole world might go down in darkness and despair without her knowledge unless her loved ones were affected. Then she would cry unto the gods to save her children though all the rest should suffer annihilation.

"I was struck by this manifestation of selfishness during a recent residence in an outlying suburb of a big city. Most of the women who lived there were mothers. By the divine right of that relation they should have a brooding tenderness for all helplessness, but did they? I could see no evidence of it. In their perfectly appointed, well cared for homes they lived strictly unto themselves. Few of them reached out for any broader interests than those of their immediate circle.

"We hear a great deal about the superiority of mothers over the single women in matters of heart interest and of home interest. Yet I fancy that the world would be much poorer if the great mother hearts of certain women had not been troubled about the little people of the underworld.

"You many a mother sells her birthright of sympathy more from thoughtlessness than from actual intent. She has had it preached to her for so many years that all the virtues have been bestowed upon her by the mere fact of motherhood that she does not realize that there is any need for effort on her part.

"Lincoln stopped the man in his work and said: "How much are you getting for this job?"

"A dollar," said the woodchopper, "and with it I must buy myself a pair of shoes."

"You go inside and warm yourself for a few minutes," said Lincoln as he took the ax from the woodchopper.

Then he swung the ax mightily and soon had the old hot split up into kindlings. He had done it so quickly that the man could hardly believe his eyes.

The poor woodchopper received his money and bought his shoes and never forgot the kindness of Abraham Lincoln.

About St. Valentine.

How our simple valentine customs ever came to be connected with so sober and reverent a person as St. Valentine has ever been a mystery. There are many theories as to how this came about, but the most probable one is that the custom descended from the ancient Romans and can be traced to their festivals of the Lupercalia, which came on the 15th of February. At this celebration names of young women were put into a box, from which they were drawn by young men.

The fathers of the church put their veto on these personal drawings and in place of the young women's names substituted the names of the saints, each person thus choosing a patron saint for the coming year. This change (by chance) was made one St. Valentine's day, the anniversary of the martyrdom of Valentine, an old time saint.

A Lincoln Story.

A young sergeant distinguished himself by his gallantry at Donelson and was recommended for promotion. He was summoned to appear before a military board at Washington and closely questioned by West Point graduates.

None of his answers was satisfactory. When the report reached President Lincoln he digested for a moment, laid the paper on his desk, then, taking one gaunt knee in his hands, said: "I don't know what to do with this case. Here's a young fellow who knows nothing of the science of losing battles. He doesn't even know the technical name of the fortification on which he ran up the stars and stripes in the face of the enemy." He thought a moment, then endorsed the report, "Give this man a captain's certificate."

"While this may be the extreme point of view, it illustrates to a certain extent what I mean. The overflowing love of a happy mother will not be content to know of the unhappiness of any child. It is not only her own child that she must love, but a world full of little children.

"Perhaps in the winter there is more need for the sympathetic expression of motherliness than at any other time, there are so many little ones who are cold and hungry and who need some one to think of them. It is for the hearts of the real mothers to respond to this need and to seek out these shivering little lambs and to shelter them in some fold where they may be cared for and protected."

Dressing the Child.

Some children do not lend themselves to any sort of artistic dressing. But, on the other hand, there are a great many who do, the arrangement of the hair having a large say in the consummation of a picturesque appearance.

Instance after instance can be recalled where a child with no real claim to beauty has been rendered of most attractive appearance, thanks to a discreet arrangement of the hair. But it seems to those who have the dressing of children very close at heart that we have come to a sort of standstill.

The lack of any really fresh deportment is very marked. The same ground is worked year after year, and anything more deplorable than the spectacle of a little girl dressed in a tight skirt, a travesty of her mother's, is nowhere to be found.

The stage may, perchance, essay a scintillation of any fashionable tootle, but a girl so dressed will go in with the crowd.

Fidgeting Children.

The child who shows no disposition to move about and is apparently happier sitting still will grow up to be slow witted, heavy. On the other hand, the baby who is always using its arms and legs will be intelligent, its brain will work quickly, and it will without doubt be clever.

Children should consequently be encouraged when in the infant stage to throw their arms and legs about, to play with their fingers and toes, and when they are older the wise parent will not insist on their keeping still.



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TRY OURS.

"I am forced to ask this question when I see the many mothers who



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